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Dr David Collins CBE
Interim Principal
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Dear Dr Collins

Ofsted inspection of ITE provision leading to Awarding Body qualifications in the lifelong learning/further education sector

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your provision in the week beginning 17 October 2011. Please pass my thanks on to your staff for the time they gave to our telephone discussions and for the information which they provided before and during the inspection.

The visit provided valuable information which will contribute to our national evaluation and to a published national overview report. This report will identify the overall quality of provision leading to Awarding Body qualifications and identify the overall strengths and areas for development. However, in line with previous practice, inspectors will not make graded judgements of the quality of the provision in each centre; they will evaluate and feed back identified strengths and any points for further development. These are outlined below for your centre.

The published overview report will list the names of the contributing institutions but individual institutions will not be identified in the main text.

At the time of inspection, both the Certificate in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector (CTLLS) and Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector (DTLLS) programmes had finished and the next round of courses had not commenced. Interviews were carried out with former trainees, college staff and employers; course documentation, including former trainees' files, was scrutinised.

Outcomes for trainees

Retention, pass and success rates are very high on each of the CTLLS courses and on the DTLLS programme when compared with national averages. These high success rates are consistent and have been sustained where courses have run for more than one year. Success rates are also high for all groups of trainees.

All trainees are on the most appropriate course. Careful attention is given to making sure that courses match trainees' roles well and take full account of future career and professional development aspirations. The college provides very clear progression routes through Preparation to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector (PTLLS), CTLLS and on to the Post-compulsory Certificate in Education (PCE) programme, endorsed at DTLLS level, at the University of Greenwich. Bespoke DTLLS programmes are developed to suit trainee and employer needs.

Most trainees start the courses with significant teaching experience in their specialist field. The courses effectively develop their understanding of theories of learning and help them to assess the progress and achievement of their learners. Employers report that this brings real benefit to trainees' teaching. Trainees move from a teacher-led to a more learner-centred approach to teaching over the duration of the course.

The key strengths are:

- very high success rates on all programmes
- the extensive range of progression routes available
- trainees' extensive and up-to-date knowledge of their specialist subject area
- the high quality of personal support for trainees - tutors know their trainees very well
- the optional equality and diversity module, that all trainees undertake, which they consistently report is one of the most valuable aspects of their training - thinking more deeply about the needs of a diverse range of learners helps trainees reflect on their own practice
- the experienced and knowledgeable team of teacher trainers who provide high quality central training
- the way in which feedback to trainees on their teaching is very encouraging, good on identifying strengths and building confidence
- feedback on assignments is clear and provides a clear indication of how the assessment criteria are met
- excellent communication between the college and its partners to support trainees and develop bespoke courses to suit the needs of employers and trainees
- rigorous self-assessment that follows the structure of the Ofsted common inspection framework - increasing trainee involvement in the process has brought significant benefit to course development.

The key areas for development are:

- sharpening the initial needs analysis and rigorously monitoring individual trainee's progress against clear expectations and setting challenging developmental targets
- identifying the few trainees whose teaching experience is with a narrow range of learners and find opportunities to allow them to put their increased understanding of equality and diversity into practice

- formalising the roles and responsibilities of partners, including those of the specialist mentor for tracking trainees' progress, providing subject-specific input to training and involvement in evaluation and development of the training.

As explained in the inspection guidance, a copy of this letter will be published on the Ofsted website. It will also be available to the team for your next inspection.

Yours sincerely

Peter Gale

Her Majesty's Inspector